

**External Consultant's Report, 2004  
of the  
Department of Art History,  
Faculty of Fine Arts  
at  
Concordia University  
1455, de Maisonneuve Blvd., West  
Montreal, Quebec H3G 1M8**

Submitted by  
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i. Summary

o Strengths of the Department of Art History

The most apparent strengths of the Department of Art History are as follows:

- Significant research productivity and accomplishments among senior professors as well as among faculty at earlier stages of their careers.
- Commitment to high quality teaching and learning on the undergraduate and graduate levels within a context of relatively limited fiscal resources.
- An undergraduate art history curriculum that is comprehensive and sound in its range, sequence, and depth of course offerings as well as in its diversity of pedagogical methods and critical strategies and themes.
- Flexible and student-centered graduate art history programs that encourage innovative research as well as original and individual approaches to careers in art history and related fields.
- A teaching and learning environment that appears to be stimulating and supportive for both undergraduate and graduate students as well as highly collegial for faculty. The collective good will, enthusiasm, and intellectual vitality of the engaged faculty seem to encourage students on all levels to take responsibility for their own learning and development. The grouping of most courses with related topics or themes rather than in accordance with strict chronologies or national categories seems to emphasize intellectual relationships rather than more mechanical assumptions. As stated in the Departmental self-study appraisal, this approach encourages students to engage in cross-disciplinary study and debates of art history and theory. Moreover, such an approach is likely to develop a better understanding among students of the possibilities of the discipline and the potential connections with other fields of inquiry and practice. This expansive attitude is likely to be stimulating to art history majors as well as to students in other creative and scholarly studies.
- Its location in a Faculty of Fine Arts that also includes serious and ambitious programs in visual art practices, art education, film production and theory as well as in other creative fields and disciplines in the Faculty and in Concordia University as a whole.
- Its geographical situation in a culturally rich city that provides challenging opportunities for innovative scholarship, creative practices, and professional experience.
- A dynamic department that has successfully attracted gifted yet diverse younger scholars who complement the mid and later career

faculty while it continues to plan its further renewal in the coming years.

- The Gail and Stephen A. Jarislowsky Institute for studies in Canadian Art. The establishment of this Institute reinforces the excellent reputation of the Department for its unwavering commitment to the study and research of Canadian Art.
- Weaknesses of the Department of Art History  
The weaknesses of the department, as I assess them, are as follows:
  - Limited number of faculty with research expertise and prominent accomplishment in Contemporary Art. Given the previously mentioned opportunities to serve the needs of the Faculty of Fine Art as a whole as well as the extraordinary and stimulating opportunities for critical investigation that are everywhere evident in the institution and in Montreal it is surprising that there are so few permanent faculty in the Department with obvious expertise in Contemporary Art History and Theory. This is particularly evident in the areas of new and emerging media and genres. Clearly, an appointment of a faculty member with substantial knowledge of art historical precedents as well as with a critical engagement with contemporary art in all of its diversity is urgently needed. Such a faculty appointment would provide essential teaching and supervisory support both for the undergraduate as well as the M.A. and PhD programs.
  - The small number of Art History faculty in the Department who are tenured or on a tenure-track in relation to the requirements of the undergraduate and graduate programs. Given the pressing needs of the increased enrolment in all art history programs, there is evidence that the academic quality and faculty research may be eroded by the necessary expansion of class sizes which, in turn, has increased faculty workload. To maintain the desired academic standards as well as the expected level of faculty research, leadership, graduate supervision and service, it is strongly recommended that another full time appointment be made in accordance with the developing priorities of the department. The Department has prioritized architectural history.
  - Inadequate funding levels for graduate students. The current scholarships, fellowship and assistantships available in art history are not competitive in relation to M.A. and PhD programs at comparable universities in Canada.

- Inadequacy of technological support for teaching, particularly in relation to visual resources. Given the efficiencies, effectiveness, and the opportunities for flexible learning that are now afforded by the digitalization of visual images, it is important that every effort be made to provide resources to digitize the required visual resources for art history courses. Although there may be copyright issues that will need to be addressed, the current slide collection at the very least needs to be transferred to a digital format. This work could be achieved through a contract employee or through an external provider. Alternatively, the full time employment of a qualified technician could provide technological support for faculty as well as for processing diverse visual materials for digital technologies.
- Inadequate study and research facilities for graduate students in Concordia University library. Immediate steps must be taken to provide quiet and secure study carrels for graduate students, with priority given to PhD students. There is serious frustration among the doctoral students about this crucial matter which has undermined their morale and their otherwise positive views of their educational experience at Concordia.

- Numbered Recommendations

1. Appoint two additional, full-time faculty in Contemporary Art and Architecture
  - As stated previously, these appointments are necessary to reinforce current strengths and to enable collaborative opportunities with other academic units in the Faculty of Fine Arts as well as with other programs and disciplines in the university as a whole.
  - In my view, critical and historical expertise in new technological media and emerging genres should be expected with these appointments while also expecting a capacity to provide a balanced understanding of relevant aesthetic and theoretical contexts.
  - In addition I encourage the expectation of some expertise in non-western art and architecture as a desired qualification.
2. Aggressively seek additional financial assistance or employment opportunities for graduate students.
3. Improve undergraduate advising system to assist students with the negotiation of the comprehensive curricular offerings available to them in art history and other aspects of their university studies. A more formal advising system would ensure that every student is prepared to make efficient and effective academic progress, and to make informed career and further study choices.

4. Following the implementation of the new undergraduate program revisions (including the new BFA in Art History and Film Studies), strengthen strategic curricular and research opportunities with the School of Cinema, the Studio Programs, and the Art Education Programs as well as with the Department of Communications (which I believe is located in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences).
  - Further priority should also be given to improving course offerings in non-western art and culture.
5. Continue to seek fiscal and staff support for the further development of the digital visual resources of the Slide Collection as well as the transfer of slides to digital format or the licensing of digital collections for teaching, study, and research.
  - Ideally a full-time technician is required to plan, develop, and maintain ongoing technical and instructional support for the collection as well as for computer assisted learning that is essential to the study of visual resources and texts.
6. Proactive actions must be undertaken to encourage greater communication, and formal and informal interaction between the undergraduate and graduate students, faculty, staff and alumni.
  - Such initiatives as well as related, regular scholarly, career, and social events would contribute to the quality of student life and the overall sense of community.
7. Immediately improve private and collective study facilities in the library and revise library behavioral policies that currently negatively effect the study and learning environment for graduate students.
8. Sustain and strengthen, if possible, the exemplary research and pedagogical activities of the Gail and Stephan A. Jarislowsky Institute for Studies in Canadian Art. As noted previously, the work of this Institute reinforces the Department's essential reputation as the leading centre for the study and research of Canadian art history.
9. Support the Concordia University Research Chair in Art History.
10. With the guidance and assistance of Concordia University's development office as well as other relevant institutional support, fundraising initiatives should be undertaken to develop endowments for undergraduate and graduate awards, scholarships, and fellowships in accordance with departmental priorities.

- As part of such efforts, the Department's own plans to establish an Art History Alumni Association should be pursued. Although such an organization would certainly foster better relations with graduates, its impact on raising funds for scholarships and awards is likely to be felt in the longer term. A more immediate result is likely to be an improved mechanism for tracking the career developments of graduates.

ii. Outline of the Visit

- Who was interviewed
- Facilities observed
- Additional activities relevant to the academic appraisal

On Thursday, March 11 and Friday, March 12, 2004, both external consultants, Dr. Bridgett Elliott (Professor of Art History, University of Western Ontario) and Ron Shuebrook (President, Ontario College of Art & Design) took part in the site visit as part of the academic appraisal. The following is the itinerary and related comments in relation to the visit:

Thursday, March 11, 2004

8:30 am – 9:30 am	Dr. Maureen Gowing, Chair and Convener, Academic Appraisals and Dr. Brian Foss, Associate Dean – Academic Advising Student Affairs Room, GM 600-17 (1550 de Maisonneuve Blvd. Dr. Gowing and Dr. Foss described the objectives of the appraisal process, the responsibilities of the external consultation and answered questions.
9:30 am – 10:00 am	Dr. Foss further discussed the appraisal process, the plans for the rest of the site visit, and the new facilities that are currently under construction.
10:00 am – 11:00 am	Met with Dr. Catherine Mackenzie, Chair of the Mel Hoppenheim School of Cinema in the offices of the School of Cinema, Room FB-319 (1250 Guy Street). Dr. Mackenzie briefly introduced the external consultants to the School of Cinema and its programs as well as to current and potential curricular relationships with the Department of Art History including the BFA Major in Art History and Film Studies.
11:00 am – 12:00 pm	Met with Dean Elizabeth Sacca, School of Graduate Studies, Room S-205 (2145 MacKay St.) and discussed the objectives for the appraisal process in terms of the Graduate Programs in relationship to the evaluation of academic quality, graduate student funding and

- related support, graduate faculty workload, evolution of research mandate for Concordia University, and other related matters.
- 12:00 pm – 1:30 pm Had lunch with Dr. Kristina Hunealt, Graduate Programme Director and Dr. Loren Lerner, Chair, Department of Art History at Bishop Bistro and discussed general state of the Department of Art History and Concordia University. Dr. Hunealt escorted consultants to Dean's office, Faculty of Fine Arts.
- 1:30 pm – 2:30 pm Met with Dean Christopher Jackson, Faculty of Fine Arts in the Visual Arts Building, Room VA-250 (1395 René Lévesque Blvd. West) who provided overview of Faculty of Fine Arts including issues of class size, limited graduate student funding, research support, duplication of course content among certain academic units, technical requirements for information Technology, etc.
- 2:30 pm – 3:30 pm Discussion with Dr. Francois-Marc Gagnon, Director and Chair of the Gail and Stephen A. Jarislowsky Institute for Studies in Canadian Art and Rosemary Joly, Administrator of the Institute in VA-433-1.
- The External consultants were introduced to the research objectives, projects, and publications of the Institute and also participated in an informal tour of its facilities.
- 3:45 pm – 4:30 pm The External Consultants met with Melinda Reinhart, Reference Librarian, Webster Library where the art collection and related materials are housed and toured selected study spaces (1400 de Maisonneuve Blvd. West).
- 5:00 pm Professor Sandra Paikowsky introduced the External Consultants to the Leonard and Bina Ellen Art Gallery of Concordia University and outlined the history and exhibition programs of the gallery (1400 de Maisonneuve Blvd. West). As the former Director/Curator of the Concordia University Art Gallery, Professor Paikowsky continues to curate exhibitions for the Ellen Gallery including the, then, current Jack Beder, City Lights exhibition to which she introduced the consultants.
- 7:00 pm – 9:00 pm External Consultants met for a dinner meeting to review the experiences of the day and to discuss the appraisal process of the Department of Art History.

#### Friday, March 12, 2004

All the meetings were conducted in the Visual Arts Building at 1395 René Lévesque Blvd. West.

9:00 am – 10:00 am	Met with several graduate students (approx. eight students) to discuss their experiences in and judgment of the quality of their studies (VA-245).
10:00 am – 11:00 am	Met with two undergraduate students to discuss their experiences in and evaluations of the quality of the Art History Program (VA-245).
11:00 am – 11:30 am	Met with several part-time faculty to discuss their roles in delivering the Art History Programs and their assessment of the strengths and limitations of the Programs and the overall teaching and learning environment.
11:30 am – 12:15 pm (approx.)	Met with full-time faculty to discuss the history for the Department of Art History, its curricular and research goals and objectives, the Undergraduate and Graduate Programs as well as the facilities and resources that support the Department's objectives or are needed to carry out its academic mission.
12:30 pm – 2:00 pm	Full-time faculty and staff members gathered for lunch in a local restaurant and informal conversations focused on faculty research, the history and status of Concordia University in the Quebec system, and the development of the Art History curriculum and its support needs.
2:00 pm – 2:30 pm	Met with Jo-Anne Anselmi in VA-243 who outlined her various duties as Assistant to the Chair of the Department of Art History.
2:30 pm – 3:00 pm	Had discussion about slide resources and challenges with Janice Anderson, Visual Curator of the Slide Library and Adjunct Professor in the Department of Art History and briefly toured the Slide Library (VA-433-5).
3:00 pm – 3:45 pm (approx.)	Met with Professor David Elliott, Head of the Studio Department, Faculty of Fine Arts to discuss curricular relationships and related opportunities for cooperation between the studio and Art History Programs (VA-242).

### iii. Faculty

- My judgments generally reinforce the collective strengths of Faculty as described in the Self-Appraisal.
  - The engaged and accomplished scholars and researchers who comprise the Department of Art History appear to be extremely collegial and dedicated to the welfare and learning of their students in both undergraduate and graduate programs.

This department's particular strengths include its exemplary dedication to the teaching and research of Canadian art and

architecture, an inspiring accomplishment that is well-known in the university community across Canada. It also offers an up to date, comprehensive, and flexible range of historical period, thematic, and methodology courses. Joint-undergraduate art history major and minor programs with both the Studio Art Department and Film Studies Department take advantage of the opportunities of being located in a Faculty of Fine Arts in a large urban University. My very positive impression of the faculty as a whole is that they are vital individuals of intellectual curiosity, generosity and accomplishment who seek to advance their Department's mission. It is an innovative and lively educational community in which informed and responsive teaching is built on a sound foundation of significant scholarship and research.

- With recent retirements and/or scaling back of institutional commitment by certain long serving faculty, the Department of Art History seems to have achieved a balance between senior and junior faculty. Although there is certainly need for additional full-time appointments in Contemporary Art and Architecture, the current faculty complement exemplifies an impressive generational balance as well as an appropriate range of expertise and ideological orientation.
- Given the relatively modest number of full-time, tenure stream faculty, it is obviously essential to the meeting of the undergraduate program needs to employ a significant number of part-time instructors as well as teaching assistants and sessional faculty. Given the objective of maintaining the appropriate academic and research standards, the Department seeks to maintain relatively modest-size classes and is, therefore, dependent on the available expertise of part-time faculty and graduate students to adequately deliver the curriculum. Although there seems to be a reasonable balance between full and part-time faculty, it is troubling that certain key contemporary topics and introductory courses appear to be offered primarily by part-time or sessional faculty. There has also been commentary that undergraduate students require greater formal academic advising from full-time faculty than is, apparently, offered. Due to the restricted responsibilities of part-time faculty, it is likely that full-time faculty members are better able to provide students with comprehensive program counseling. Unfortunately, the appropriate full-time faculty teaching workload of two courses plus the extensive graduate supervision of M.A., and PhD students (as well as committee work and related service, administrative responsibilities, and essential research apparently) leaves little time for consistent academic advising for undergraduate students in the major and minor programs as well as for general interest students. It is also important to note that both senior, mid-career, and junior faculty currently serve in significant administrative and academic leadership roles within the Department and other units of the Faculty of Fine Arts. This responsible sense of institutional service that these full time art historians demonstrate is certainly admirable and may strategically reinforce the influence of art historical discourse in the consciousness of the Faculty of Fine Arts as a whole. Unfortunately, the significant number of art historians who are serving

among the limited number of full time faculty must certainly restrain the availability of their expertise for teaching responsibilities and other roles. Moreover, the expanded research responsibilities of the Concordia Research Chair may also increase pressure to deliver an even greater percentage of undergraduate offerings with part-time faculty and graduate students.

- With the recent loss of a crucial faculty member with expertise and accomplishment in Contemporary Art to another university and the expanding undergraduate and graduate enrolments, there is an essential opportunity to make appointments of two tenure-stream faculty members in Contemporary Art and Architecture. As noted earlier, there is a significant need for art historical and theoretical expertise in new media and emerging genres among the full time faculty. Moreover, to ensure curricular coherence and balance, such a faculty appointment must also recognize a requirement for this professor to have the expertise to place these contemporary developments in an informed critical and historical context. It is likely that the other appointment might be in architectural history with an ability to broaden the non-western offerings of the art history program as well. This latter area is particularly important if the Department is to serve the culturally diverse student body of Concordia University.
- In my view, the scholarly and pedagogical achievements of the senior Art History Faculty as well as many of their predecessors in the department have been fundamental to an understanding of Canadian Art History. This excellent pioneering work continues into the present and has been extended into multi-disciplinary enquiry as well as into recent concerns with versions of art histories from the point of view of gender, identity politics, and First Nations culture. The cluster of expertise in British art in the department as well as the faculty potential to lead the emerging scholarship and study related to craft and decorative arts practices and histories are initiatives that are worthy of development. Moreover, the establishment of the Gail and Stephen A. Jarislowsky Institute for Studies in Canadian Art reinforces the Departments' unrivaled leadership role in foregrounding scholarship in Canadian Art. Its Advisory Board is comprised of many of the most distinguished, scholars, curators and connoisseurs who have a demonstrated commitment to nurturing and understanding the history of the visual arts in this country.
- In comparison to other mid-sized art history departments in Canada, most of the current senior and mid-career faculty have been awarded numerous fellowships, and grants throughout their careers with substantial support from provincial and national funding agencies and institutions. The junior faculty have also attracted similar awards and promise to bring significant credit in this regard to the Department and themselves. The award of a Concordia Research Chair to a younger scholar attests to the institutional confidence in this individual and the research contributions and potential of the department itself. On the whole, the faculty who are at earlier stages of their careers are pursuing research directions that are well-informed by recent critical and theoretical trends and are likely to sustain the serious research profile of the department.

- The lively, courageous, and often innovative scholarship of the faculty has contributed to a teaching and learning environment that stimulates students to pursue personally meaningful areas of study and to recognize themselves in the art histories and interpretations of those histories which they investigate. Although the heavy institutional workload of full-time faculty and the part-time responsibilities of other instructors appear to diminish the otherwise supportive sense of community that students have stated they feel, the professional and scholarly engagements of faculty are clearly catalysts for the students' current studies and future opportunities. The excellent record of diverse career employment and further study by former undergraduate and graduate students reinforces the value of a learning environment that is informed by committed scholarship and creative research.

#### **iv. Admission Standards and Procedures**

As indicated in interviews, conversation, and as suggested by Concordia University's reputation and history, the Department of Art History attracts students of diverse academic, cultural, and economic backgrounds as well as individuals of a variety of ages. Many of these non-traditional students are attracted by the flexible and generous admission standards and opportunities that are afforded by Concordia University in many of its undergraduate and graduate programs, including the Art History, Studio Art, and Cinema Studies. Although many students apparently do not have the same record of higher academic achievement as indicated by secondary school grade point averages, life experiences and individual motivation seems to ensure the academic success of those students who complete the art history programs. Although these sensitive and individually oriented admission standards and procedures may present challenges to traditional approaches to academic pedagogy and learning support, the nurturing and concerned approach of faculty to the teaching of art history as well as the interdisciplinary options available seems to encourage most students in their studies. Consequently, retention of undergraduate students is apparently reasonable.

Unfortunately, I have not reviewed actual statistics that would affirm this judgment nor is it possible to effectively assess the academic contribution to the liberal education of non-majors who obviously take art history courses. Based on my own thirty-five year career in higher education, I am convinced that the opportunities for students from other fields including studio art majors to study art history is essential to their overall education and future success as informed practitioners, consumers, and audience members.

#### **v. Adequacy of Student Support**

Students have affirmed that faculty, both full and part-time, are nurturing and readily available in relation to their coursework. Unfortunately, both undergraduate and graduate students in the department seemed to require greater formal counseling about academic, career, and program policies and opportunities. As stated above, the heavy and complex responsibilities of full-time faculty do not seem to enable them to counsel students on a regular basis. Although the "as needed" basis of academic and program counseling by the Department Chair and her assistant may satisfy obvious needs of the

more confident students, less mature or more vulnerable students may never seek out the advice necessary to efficiently and effectively navigate their academic program.

Funding and scholarship support for graduate students is woefully inadequate and apparently is a significant reason for losing many first choice graduate applicants. Steps must be taken immediately to improve financial support for M.A. and PhD students.

vi. Quality of Graduate Student Research

I have only had the opportunity to review the anecdotal information available about the careers of former graduate students as well as an extended list of M.A. and PhD Thesis topics. Based on this minimum information, many graduates of the M.A. art history programs and of the interuniversity PhD. program as well as the Special Individualized Graduate Programs and the PhD in Humanities have emerged as significant contributors in higher education and cultural practices and discourse across Canada. I recognize the names of many of these individuals because of my own experience in the communities of higher education and culture.

vii. Student Completion Rates and Student Retention

- I have received insufficient data to comment on the completion rates of undergraduate art history majors. However, on the M.A. level, the vast majority of students appear to complete their programs despite the limited funding support. On the PhD. level in the various programs, the candidates seem to be slow in the completion of their degrees due to their need for additional employment including teaching opportunities as caused by the inadequate funding for doctoral students and the desire for teaching experience. In addition, the limited number and range of topics of graduate seminars available to M.A. Students seems to discourage the timely completion of the appropriate coursework in accordance with the individual study objectives and interests of students.
- Although information about the Art History Programs are available on the Department website to students, ongoing academic advising seems to be largely carried out by the Department Chair, and by the Graduate Program Director with crucial help from the Department Assistant. More informal course-related counseling seems to be available from other faculty when requested. I would suggest a more formal system of undergraduate advising be established in which undergraduate students with either an Art History major or minor are assigned a faculty mentor with whom they consult about their academic courses at least once during the academic year, preferably prior to registration for their next sequence of studies. In addition, I would also recommend that the Department conduct information sessions by faculty, graduate students, and alumni about advanced study opportunities and career options in art history and related fields. According to graduate program information, all graduate students are, in fact, expected to meet with the Graduate Director when first registering.

As far as developing more formal career contacts and/or experiences which would relate more directly the academic education to future employment opportunities, it is noted that the Chair recently explored possibilities for a co-op program for Art History. This initiative should be pursued with greater urgency and institutional support. Other related research and study options such as internships and field study in other complementary settings for academic credit on an upper level of the undergraduate program or even as part of the M.A. Program should also be explored.

viii. Student Completion Rates and Student Retention

According to the summary for data provided in the Department's own self-study appraisal, there are reasons to be concerned about the retention of students in the Major in the Art History Program. It appears that fewer than fifty per cent of the originally admitted students complete the undergraduate Major in Art History over an extended period of time. At the very least, the statistics as submitted in the Department's document suggest less than ideal academic progress. However, without specific information on the tracking of specific students, it is very difficult to make concrete assessments about the causes for this apparently low graduation rate (compared to the rate of completion expected in university programs in Ontario which I believe is over ninety percent). I believe that in the United States the degree completion rates on average at public universities or colleges are also below fifty percent of those admitted.

I would certainly agree with the Department's view that there is reason for concern.

In relation to this apparent retention challenge, only two undergraduate students were available to be interviewed by the External Consultants during the one visit. At minimum, this minimal number of students in attendance suggested either inappropriate scheduling or ineffective communication with the undergraduate students. The students who did attend appreciated the supportive teaching of faculty but indicated that they did not have a regular academic advisor who could provide guidance with the selection of courses and the development of their course of study. Given the admirable number and range of courses and the very limited traditional survey courses, inexperienced or unsophisticated students would probably have great difficulty in pursuing a coherent, individually directed course of study. Of the two students interviewed, one had previous study in another university in another city and had come specifically to Concordia to study art history. The other student was much younger and at an earlier stage of her university education. In my view, she seemed to have wandered into the Major Program on a whim and seemed to have very little awareness of how the art history coursework might be developmentally pursued to provide a more meaningful educational experience. I expect that it is unlikely that she will complete her degree in Art History.

On the basis of this limited but telling contact with students as well as the above general statistical data on undergraduate retention, I would strongly urge the Department of Art History to rethink its academic advising system and to be more aggressive in communicating the academic objectives and study opportunities in art history to students prior to enrolment. At any rate, I recommend that proactive steps be taken to assist undergraduate art history students to navigate the Art History Program on an ongoing basis. Mention has been made in the Department Appraisal that there is a need to encourage a greater sense of student community. I certainly agree with this observation and suggest that such encouragement of student interaction in the departmental community that includes undergraduate and graduate students as well as faculty, staff, and, if possible, alumni would probably contribute to an improved retention rate.

ix. Adequacy of Library Resources

o Visual Art Collection

Although I did not have an opportunity to search the Webster Library's Collection during my visit to the Concordia University, I do accept the judgment of the Art History faculty who have reassured me about the excellent holdings in relevant visual art areas. The Visual Art librarian toured us in the relevant areas in the library and discussed the overall operations of the library. I must reiterate that there was significant noise in the visual art area of the library. Moreover, the graduate students apparently do not have private study carrels that can be locked nor are the graduate study rooms reserved for the graduate students needs as one would expect. At the time of our visit, undergraduates were meeting in the one room that we visited and apparently were not engaged in serious study as evident by their somewhat boisterous behavior. This lack of adequate facilities for private study and research for graduate students is troubling and should be remedied immediately. With these first hand observations stated, it is also evident that the visual art librarian is an excellent resource person who manages a very good collection of 13,400 periodicals and 20,000 books. In addition, graduate students have the opportunity to borrow from a variety of other resources including museum libraries through the Interlibrary Loan Office. We were also informed that there is an appropriate collection policy that supports current Art History Program needs.

o Slide Collection

The Slide Collection serves the entire University as well as the Art History Programs and consists of 300,000 circulating slides as well as an additional 100,000 slides that are available for research purposes only. There is one highly qualified slide curator who is also a scholar and adjunct professor of art history as well as seven part-time employees who support the staff requirements of the facility. As indicated elsewhere, the slide collection should be digitized for future efficiencies and greater instructional effectiveness. Consequently, a technician is required to digitize the collection where possible and for on going collection development as well as to provide regular support for faculty and students. Further collection development in the digital format is likely to be pursued through purchasing appropriate image data

bases which would respect copyright and avoid infringement on intellectual property rights.

x. Adequacy of Laboratory, Office Space, Studio Space and Any Other Physical Resource Facilities, Where Appropriate

I understand that with the completion of the new building which is currently under construction the Department of Art History expects to have excellent office space for faculty, graduate students, and staff as well as graduate and research facilities, a seminar room, the Slide Library and the Jarislowsky Institute for Studies in Canadian Art. I have also been informed that two lecture halls with comfortable seating and up-to-date technology will also be included. Unfortunately, I have not been able to verify these claims through architectural drawings or by an architectural program that might be guiding the construction. I do understand that the original plans for the new facility had included three galleries that would have been reserved for the pedagogical and curatorial needs of Art History and Art Education but that there will now only be a single gallery included due to fiscal pressures on the project. Given that both Art History and Art Education have M.A. and PhD. graduate programs, this single gallery is already clearly inadequate to the essential requirements for instruction and research in these fields. I would urge the university to seek external resources to enable at least one gallery to be specified for the essential teaching and learning requirements of the Art History program.

xi. Adequacy of Technological or Digital Support, where Appropriate

Apparently students have regular access to computer facilities that are essential to their coursework and ongoing research. As noted elsewhere, the visual resources such as slides have not been digitized which would improve the delivery and access to visual materials important to studies in art history. I do understand that funds have recently been received to purchase a computer, scanner, CD burner, printer and software as part of preparation to assist faculty in the development of Power Point lectures. According to the self-study report, this facility will be available for faculty use sometime in 2004. Although a contract employee might be hired to digitize the existing collection, an ongoing technician needs to be hired to be able to maintain the digital technology and to support the further development of the collection in this format and to assist faculty and students with the ongoing requirements of teaching, learning, and research.

As stated in the section on the Library resources, I believe that there are forty computers available for use in library as well as online resources and a web-page to assist student research and study needs. With the new instructional facilities available in the soon to be completed building, it is also my understanding that seminar rooms and the two lecture halls will be technologically equipped as required for instruction. I am not aware whether it will be possible for students to bring their own laptops which would enable them to take notes or to participate in on-line learning on a regular basis. The Self-Study Report does indicate that several educational websites have resulted

from faculty and student research with the support of external funding. Apparently, these websites make available research data including selected rare and hard-to-access primary materials and images that are particularly useful to creative and scholarly art history in Canada. This is an excellent initiative that should be expanded as resources become available.

In addition, the teaching of a part-time senior instructor includes a survey course on technology and contemporary art as well as a selected topics course that addresses the emergence of art that investigates the potential of biotechnology as a source and catalyst for art practice. In both these courses, the intellectual background and potential of computer technology for communication and creative practice are admirably considered. Moreover, it has been indicated that these courses are taught with and through various media. Unfortunately, the expertise of this single part-time instructor appears not to be evident in the competencies of other faculty, particularly tenured professors. Consequently, the availability of this information and the presence of such multi-media instruction can only be assured as long as this contract teacher is employed. In my judgment, these areas of study and research of recent technologically-based artistic practices as well as multi-media approaches to instruction should be priorities both in the required expertise of new tenure-stream faculty appointments as well as in the classroom facilities that are under construction or planned for the future.

xii. Curriculum Requirements and/or Professional Training and Preparation for Practice

In my judgment, the undergraduate and graduate curricula is well-conceived, current, and responsive to student needs and interests. The breadth and depth of the undergraduate course offerings provides a potentially comprehensive education in Western visual culture with an emphasis on Canadian art and architecture as well as innovative thematic, theoretical, and methodology courses. As well as the important focus on Canadian art, the course offerings in the history of various craft disciplines seems to be unique in Canada. In my experience, the history of these fields is generally only offered in the degree-granting art and design institutions as well as in several Canadian community colleges and certain CEGEPs in Quebec. The curriculum provides an education that should provide each student with diverse versions of the art of the past and present while addressing art objects and practices within their various intellectual, historical, cultural, political, social and economic contexts. Although I have some concerns about the very fragmentary and provisional historical framework that the emphasis on "aspects of" courses reinforce, the re-introduction of a modified survey course such as the new Perspectives in Art History improves the situation. Apparently, this new 200 level course has been established in response to student requests and should help them to place their further studies within a more adequate historical framework. However, given my stated concerns about the seemingly informal approach to academic advising, I remain somewhat skeptical about most undergraduate students' preparation at the initial stages of their university studies to make informed choices about the sequences and intellectual connections between their chosen courses.

In addition, though I acknowledge that there is a stated Department desire to offer courses in non-western art, currently there apparently are very few offerings that address other visual cultures and traditions. Given the diversity of the Concordia community and the stated objective of the Department of Art History to offer a curriculum that is characterized by a diversity of methodologies, I would urge the Department to seek ways to increase its course offerings to reflect the global interaction of visual cultures and histories. On the whole, these few reservations do not compromise the essential judgment that the Art History programs meet appropriate curricular standards. Moreover, there is "a high level of satisfaction with the quality of teaching" as indicated by the undergraduate student questionnaires administered by the Office of Institutional Research.

As indicated in the Self-Appraisal Report, the MA Program increasingly has focused on socially and theoretically motivated interpretive practices which seems particularly consistent with the majority of newer faculty members' expertise pertaining to issues of race and ethnicity, nationalism, gender and identity, philosophical structures of subjectivity, etc. These approaches seem to have responded to shifts over the last ten to twenty years from a dominant connoisseurship-based orientation to the so-called "new art history" approach which tends to stress concerns of meaning derived from the socio-political-economic context of the art object and practice rather than from a close engagement with and interpretation of the formal and material properties of the work of art which also includes the iconographic.

I would urge the department to consider both the merits of the study and interpretation of the potential causal relationship between the socio-political-cultural context and the inherent properties, both perceptual and material, which are, in much art, essential to the meaning and experience of the aesthetic object. That said, the graduate student Appraisal Survey Report does not seem to indicate a concern about this matter among M.A. and PhD students. However, on the part of M.A. Students, there is clearly some frustration about the limited number of M.A. seminars (three) that are currently available because of restricted range of course topics offered. At times, these available courses have already been taken by some students which, therefore, slows their academic progress. In other cases, the topics available seem to reflect the research interests of faculty rather than the particular educational needs and interests of students. On the other hand, the M.A. Students welcome the opportunities that these seminars provide for intellectual interaction with their peers and for the building of community and sense of purpose that the lively discussion and debate encourages.

With the recommended appointment of the two additional full time faculty whose expertise emphasizes contemporary art and architecture, there will be an opportunity to expand the breadth and depth of graduate seminars that can be offered each term.

As far as evaluation of actual student achievement in the undergraduate programs is concerned, I have no concrete way of determining the quality of the undergraduate work or the process by which the educational outcomes of the undergraduate programs are measured. On the other hand, M.A. degree students do present an overview of their thesis content publicly to the Department which gives some indication that a broadly held standard of academic achievement is pursued. Similarly, the interuniversity nature of the doctoral program

that is administered by Concordia University, Université de Montréal, Université du Québec à Montréal and Université Laval provides students with access to excellent faculty with a broad range of expertise in both American and European art from the Middle Ages to the present. The comprehensive examinations (2 written and/oral) that are taken following the required "Atelier de Recherche" seem to measure appropriately students' areas of specialization and to ensure the necessary theoretical and methodological expertise to enable the doctoral candidate to undertake the thesis. The thesis defense seems to be structured in a appropriately rigorous manner and includes five specialists (!).

In conclusion, the undergraduate and graduate programs integrate diverse approaches to art history, both theoretically and methodologically. The great emphasis on North American visual-culture is appropriate to the Montreal context and has given the Department an opportunity to establish national leadership in Canadian Art historical scholarship and research.

xiii. Quality of the Programs in Relation to Other Programs on Provincial, National and International Levels

As stated previously, the Department of Art History has achieved a leadership role in teaching and research in Canadian Art History across Canada on both undergraduate and graduate levels. This should be fully evident by the publication and research records of faculty and graduates as well as through the presence of the Gail and Stephen A. Jarislowsky Institute for Studies in Canadian Art as well as the publication of the Journal of Canadian Art History by a distinguished senior Department faculty member. Moreover, the development of the M.A. Program and more recently, the inter-university PhD Program in Art History as well as the other related doctoral programs have attracted many excellent graduate students due to the flexible and innovative areas of study and enquiry that are encouraged in the Department. Moreover, many of these exceptionally vital graduates are now contributing as influential professors, critics, scholars, and curators across the country.

Because my own professional experience as an academic is limited in Quebec, I can only assume that these achievements are recognized in the province due to the bilingual nature of the PhD program and the research contributions of faculty in relation to significant aspects of Quebec art history. Concerning the qualitative standards of the Concordia University Art History programs in relation to international institutions, it is my considered judgment that Concordia's programs are comparable to better public institutions in the United States, Australia, and the UK. My limited experience with higher education in other nations makes it impossible for me to make further comparisons. I urge the department to continue its dynamic and flexible approach to curricular opportunities which has enabled it to emerge as a leader compared to the more conservative, though respectable approaches that, in my experience, have characterized most of the older art history programs in Canada. To reinforce this educational vision and dynamism, I strongly recommend that the Department strengthen its curricular and research collaborations with studio practitioners, the School of Cinema, Communications, Art Education (I believe this program also has a PhD

program) and other departments of the University as well as external cultural institutions in the City of Montreal as a whole. Such strategic initiatives will, of course, require fiscal support, additional faculty appointments, and facilities development and renewal. I urge the University to recognize the past accomplishments and burgeoning promise of this dedicated department and to provide the material support to enable it to contribute fully to the University's growing reputation for innovation, accessibility, and excellence.

xiv. Opportunities for any Collaboration on Partnerships

(Please see previous section xiii)

xv. How the Programs Fulfill the Faculty/School of Graduate Studies and University Academic Plans\*

- Although I did not receive the appropriate appendices from the Concordia University Academic Program Appraisal Manual, (Appendices X. Concordia Mission Statement, and the Academic Plan of the School of Graduate Studies, and the University's own Academic plan) I have surmised from other documents as well as from the site visit itself a sense of the general mission and some of the key academic objectives. The reputation of Concordia University as an institution dedicated to providing innovative and flexible educational opportunities for non-traditional students including the immigrant communities in Montreal has been confirmed by discussions with faculty, administrators, and students as well as by the reading of the many texts that I have received such as the Self-Appraisal Report, the Appraisal Survey Reports from the Office of Institutional Research, sections of the University Calendar, and Faculty Profiles and C.V.'s.

The commitment of Concordia University to interdisciplinarity has also been confirmed in these various texts and conversations. As far as the academic plan of the School of Graduate Studies is concerned, discussion with the Dean of Graduate Studies provided a useful and pertinent overview of the general academic expectations for graduate studies at Concordia University.

- In my view, the Department of Art History fulfills the academic mission and the objectives of the University and the School of Graduate Studies in the following ways:

- Admission of students on the undergraduate and graduate levels is flexible and sensitive to individual differences in opportunities for educational preparation, cultural backgrounds, and career goals.
- Program offerings encourage individual choice and opportunities for interdisciplinary studies while nurturing intellectual curiosity and critical thinking. The balance of introductory art history and methodology courses with a broad range of topic-based courses ensures an understanding of the complexities and implications that are inherent in the experience and interpretation of visual culture. Appropriate academic standards are also maintained and expected in the delivery of the curriculum.
- The exemplary faculty embody the high pedagogical and research standards that are expected of a university that is as committed to educational access as it is to achievement in academic research.
- The historic commitment of the Department of Art History to Canadian art History reinforces a confidence in the achievements of the national visual culture in the context of western traditions in art and architecture.
- The Department's attention to the education of students from the initial undergraduate years to the completion of doctoral programs is highly responsible and consistent with the overall academic goals of the university.

External Consultant's Note:

Due to the deadline for submission of my External Report as well as my own institutional commitments, it was not possible for me to review carefully the recently received additional documents. In future, I encourage the office of the Associate Dean, Academic and Student Affairs of the Faculty of Fine Arts to provide all necessary documents that are expected to be examined by the external consultant from the very beginning of the process. Moreover, it should also be made very clear from the beginning that some documents may only be available in French. My own rudimentary reading ability of French has greatly compromised my response to section XV. Concerning the Commission des universités sur les programme Report.

xvi. How the Programs Address the Points Raised in the Relevant Commission des universités sur les programmes (CUP) Report(s) Regarding the Fields Included in the Appraisal

Although my rudimentary knowledge of French has made it very difficult to address this section, I have tried to comment on the points raised by the commission. Again, I want to remind the Associate Dean and his staff that the expectation to read French only texts should be noted prior to the selection of an external consultant. Moreover, the relevant section of a 163 page document should also be automatically provided from the beginning of the appraisal process by the Dean's office.

As well as I can tell, the undergraduate and graduate programs offered by the Department of Art History have appropriate admission standards, a sound curricular rationale, excellent faculty, and essential facilities including library and slide collections. To comment further, I would need an English translation of the text.

xvii. Suggestions for the Programs' Academic Plan for the Following Five Years

o Strengths

- The Department's own self-appraisal provides, in my view, a thoughtful, clearly articulated, and accurate analysis of the exceptional strengths of the department as well as most of the weaknesses and challenges that it must address. The primary strength of the Department is embodied in the gifted and collegial faculty whose commitment and talents as educators as well as their important research activities bring distinction to the unit. Moreover, on the whole, they have developed a coherent and comprehensive undergraduate curriculum that is characterized by its considered diversity of pedagogical methods and approaches that have, however, undergone refinement and necessary revisions over the last five years.
- In addition, to the expansion of the graduate program to include the inter-universities PhD in Art History, the plans for an undergraduate degree program in Art History and Film Studies demonstrates an expansive approach to curriculum that recognizes fruitful, collaborative opportunities.
- Through the positive and supportive attitudes of faculty as well as their fundamental concern for the students and their lively research and teaching agendas, the Department has evolved a stimulating and encouraging learning environment.
- The Department is to be applauded for its essential collective capacity to reflect on itself and the curriculum that it has developed in accordance to its faculty competencies and student need. As noted elsewhere in my commentary, the decision to reintroduce a six credit

practical overview of the history of art and architecture as well as an introductory art history methodology course recognize a developmental requirement. These sensible undergraduate courses and their complementary contents provide students with a reasonable if provisional foundation for making informed academic choices and with an intellectual and chronological structure on which to build the critical knowledge to be pursued in the focused studies inherent in upper level courses. Admirably, the more advanced "aspects" or thematic courses provide specific, in-depth investigations into the complexities and competing art historical discourses as well as particular information and experience.

- Other strengths in the Academic Plan include the Department's development of timely inter-disciplinary courses as well as its various courses which probe such topics as art materials and processes, the interpretations of art and culture, and enquires into non-western visual culture. These various courses demonstrate an awareness of a need to present truly balanced versions of the diverse "histories" and perspectives through which art and architecture can be understood.
- Considered realistically, the comprehensiveness and coherence of the curriculum is likely to remain contingent and in a continuing state of becoming because of fiscal restraints and personnel limitations. The apparently balanced curricular objectives of the undergraduate programs are well-informed and should be reinforced by appointments of faculty who possess a wide-range of expertise and curiosity in relation to contemporary art, architecture, and culture. These additional, full time faculty will contribute significantly to the curricular depth and breadth of the undergraduate and graduate programs as well as to sustaining the research mission of the department.

- Weaknesses

- As suggested elsewhere, the undergraduate students seem to need a much more formal system of academic advising than is currently the case. A pro-active process that would recruit prospective majors and assign them to particular faculty advisors would assist less sophisticated or shy students in making informed choices as they negotiate the four years of undergraduate study.
- Another area of concern has to do with the obvious opportunities for the department to contribute fully to the liberal education of students across the Faculty of Fine Arts and to the students in other Faculties of the University as well. As admirable as it is to desire intimate class sizes with the intention of maintaining responsive and effective

learning environments, this assumption presumes that there are no alternative pedagogical approaches that would ensure that larger numbers of university students would be able to study art history as part of their liberal education than is currently the case. Although I fully support the fact that the Department's first priority must be to its Art History majors in undergraduate and graduate programs, I encourage the faculty to consider a compromise to this idealistic stance and to explore modes of course delivery that could also more fully serve the larger university community. Given the limited funding currently available to graduate students, I suggest that the Department might reconsider its views on course size and develop course formats that would employ graduate students, particularly PhD candidates as primary course lecturers, in team-teaching units to deliver service-oriented instruction. Although I would recommend that full-time faculty be assigned to supervise these courses, the primary instruction would be carried out by graduate students. Not only would this expanded service role for Art History provide much needed relevant employment for graduate students, it would also contribute to a greater visibility of the Department within the university community which, in turn, might garner greater support from other academic units.

- The above suggestion has been motivated by two objectives:
  - 1) to encourage the Department to expand its service role and to contribute more fully to the liberal education of all university students
  - 2) to explore additional funding and employment opportunities for graduate students while contributing to their education and skill development. The Department has strongly underscored the challenges that the underfunding of graduate students has created in attracting many of the better applicants. This fiscally driven weakness might be overcome to some extent by actually integrating the teaching experience as suggested above into the academic program of each graduate student. Given Concordia's historic leadership role in art education. It does not seem far fetched to explore this opportunity to solve a problem.

- Summary

In conclusion, I judge the implementation of the BFA with a Major in Art History and Film Studies, the enhanced curricular emphasis on crafts and decorative arts on the undergraduate and graduate levels, and the establishment of the Concordia University Research Chair as insightful and important initiatives consistent with the Department's overall objectives. These initiatives clearly take advantage of the unique opportunities of the Department of Art History as it is located in a Faculty of

Fine Arts and promise that similar pertinent curriculum and research may yet be pursued in relation to the vital yet extended university context.

xviii. Numbered Recommendations Including Prioritized List for Program Improvement and Development

1. Appoint two additional, full-time faculty in Contemporary Art and Architecture
  - As stated previously, these appointments are necessary to reinforce current strengths and to enable collaborative opportunities with other academic units in the Faculty of Fine Arts as well as with other programs and disciplines in the university as a whole.
  - In my view, critical and historical expertise in new technological media and emerging genres should be expected with these appointments while also expecting a capacity to provide a balanced understanding of relevant aesthetic and theoretical contexts.
  - In addition, I encourage the expectation of some expertise in non-western art and architecture as a desired qualification.
2. Aggressively seek additional financial assistance or employment opportunities for graduate students.
3. Improve undergraduate advising system to assist students with the negotiation of the comprehensive curricular offerings available to them in art history and other aspects of their university studies. A more formal advising system would ensure that every student is prepared to make efficient and effective academic progress, and to make informed career and further study choices.
4. Following the implementation of the new undergraduate program revisions (including the new BFA in Art History and Film Studies), strengthen strategic curricular and research opportunities with the School of Cinema, the Studio Programs, and the Art Education Programs as well as with the Department of Communications (which I believe is located in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences).
  - Further priority should also be given to improving course offerings in non-western art and culture.
5. Continue to seek fiscal and staff support for the further development of the digital visual resources of the Slide Collection as well as the transfer of slides to digital format or the licensing of digital collections for teaching, study, and research.

- Ideally a full-time technician is required to plan, develop, and maintain ongoing technical and instructional support for the collection as well as for computer assisted learning that is essential to the study of visual resources and texts.
- 6. Proactive actions must be undertaken to encourage greater communication, and formal and informal interaction between the undergraduate and graduate students, faculty, staff and alumni.
  - Such initiatives as well as related, regular scholarly, career, and social events would contribute to the quality of student life and the overall sense of community.
- 7. Immediately improve private and collective study facilities in the library and revise library behavioral policies that currently negatively effect the study and learning environment for graduate students.
- 8. Sustain and strengthen, if possible, the exemplary research and pedagogical activities of the Gail and Stephan A. Jarislowsky Institute for Studies in Canadian Art. As noted previously, the work of this Institute reinforces the Department's essential reputation as the leading centre for the study and research of Canadian art history.
- 9. Support the Concordia University Research Chair in Art History.
- 10. With the guidance and assistance of Concordia University's development office as well as other relevant institutional support, fundraising initiatives should be undertaken to develop endowments for undergraduate and graduate awards, scholarships, and fellowships in accordance with departmental priorities.
  - As part of such efforts, the Department's own plans to establish an Art History Alumni Association should be pursued. Although such an organization would certainly foster better relations with graduates, its impact on raising funds for scholarships and awards is likely to be felt in the longer term. A more immediate result is likely to be an improved mechanism for tracking the career developments of graduates.